

Caxton Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers
summarised by

Mike Petty

THE CAMBRIDGE EXPRESS, SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1893.

A Combined Show.—The Annual Show of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Agricultural Society, and Athletic Union, has been fixed for July 10th.

The Chief Constable of Lancaster.—The *Times Herald* last week gave a portrait and biography of Mr. Frank Ward, the Chief Constable of Lancaster. Mr. Ward is a Cambridge man, who, after trying several occupations, entered the police force at Leeds at the age of sixteen, and rapidly climbed the ladder, becoming chief constable of Lancaster in 1884. The biography is most interesting one, and we regret that we are unable to give a more liberal quotation from the *Times Herald*.

The Old Schools.—A conference of the clergy, churchwardens, vicars, and other persons, including some Nonconformists, interested in the maintenance of the present system of Voluntary Schools, has been held in the St. Matthew's parish room, under the presidency of the Vicar. Having made a statement as to the state of Elementary Education in Cambridge, and the necessity for raising a sum of at least £2,000 for the extension and enlargement of the Old Schools, the Chairman invited those present to say what steps they thought should be taken towards collecting the required amount. In reply to several questions, the Chairman stated that while the Old Schools were connected with the Church of England, and all the teachers were Church people, no child was compelled to learn the Catechism if the parents objected to his doing so. He also mentioned that the Governors of the Old Schools were in friendly co-operation with the Managers of the British School and that in New Street, which were also carrying on the work of religious education on their own lines. After a good deal of discussion had taken place, it was unanimously agreed that a house-to-house canvass should be made of the parish, inviting all to contribute towards the building fund, and a number of tradesmen, artisans, and others gave their names as willing to take part in the distribution of circulars and the collection of subscriptions.

Confessions of a Notorious Pickpocket.—A short, middle-aged man, dressed in fashionable style, passing as John Wilson, alias Williams, and giving addresses at Leicester and Newcastle-on-Tyne, was on Tuesday brought up at the South Holland (Lincs.) Sessions, having been apprehended on the previous day on the charge of frequenting a place of public resort, viz., Holbeach Athletic Sports and Horse Show, for the purpose of committing a felony. Evidence was given

AN ARTIST'S RAMBLES IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE.



CAXTON GIBBET.

Most of our readers have heard of Caxton and its Gibbet, but few, however, know the facts of the remarkable case which closes its traditional record. These details, which have almost faded out of knowledge, we have gathered from various sources, and collated; the story is now retold so as to make it available for ready reference. At Monkfield, a lone homestead in this locality, there lived a small farmer named Partridge. A burglar broke into the place one night, and after murdering the family made off with his booty

CAMBRIDGE

The much discussed University increased yesterday. The Athletics, which had a score against substitution, A. O. Jones, Blagden, and were strengthened by Jackson but, the night started the in the morning, and the latter's loss, especially the one made with the loss of the boundary, but a new bowler being clean by the innings, runs out of included ten more, his had thirteen in interest, caution. At signalled and been increased relieved Turn Jackson taken The Captain the wicket as runs. (115) and associate Ben putting the in the boundary when the last disastrous on ball sent des Malvern who inquirer, the Jarvis, who he self behind the upon to bowl, was smartly in trouble. (178) soon commens with the ball made in the occasions place

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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News. They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library together with have detailed cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check. There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1897 05 04

On Saturday night a stack was ignited near Caxton School. Ten minutes later a great blaze arose amongst the farm buildings at the rear of the farmhouse occupied by Mr James Paine. In about 30 minutes all the outbuildings had been destroyed. Then cries of "Fire" were heard from the centre of the village and a tongue of flame shot up at the back of the Cross Keys public-house. The villagers were now panic-stricken. Then three cottages near fell in. Only last October over a dozen houses and cottages were burnt down in the village

1900 07 19 c

Some uneasiness of mind has been caused in consequence of strange noises heard at Bourn. Here in 1753 a horrible murder was perpetrated, the perpetrator, a highwayman, was duly hanged at Caxton gibbet. A year ago some workmen averred that they distinctly heard noises resembling the rattling of sticks and some residents have become terrified. Local gossips are busy endeavouring to solve the mystery and some have been seized with the presentiment that the peculiar noises are an omen of some dreadful tragedy.

1900 12 27

The Union Workhouse at Caxton, an institution which is unique for the advanced ages attained by its inmates, celebrated Christmastide in true festive style. To many a grateful old man and woman who lot has been so cast Caxton workhouse spells 'home' and the cheery demeanour of many bore undeniable testimony to the unremitting care and attention which is bestowed upon them. A number of the inmates are confined to their beds but making a tour through the spick and span wards one could not but be struck with the effort that was being put forward by thoughtful officials on behalf of the helpless

1901 06 04

Caxton pub, p3

1901 06 07

In court Mr E.T. Hooley said that at one time the Papworth Estate was his property. At the time of his "misfortunes" it was bought by friends of his for his wife for £65,000. The amount of his indebtedness at his bankruptcy was £1,087,000 which was reduced by the courts to under £300,000; his creditors had 2s. in the £. He now lived at Papworth in the same state & affluence as he did before. He had plans to buy the Caxton Gibbet public house and rebuilt it on the other side of the road on his own property which would be a distinct improvement

1903 03 05

A petition for a new public house at Knapwell was considered by magistrates. The rectors of Conington and Caxton both said it would be a public advantage as there was not a public house in the village. There were 24 houses in the village proper, of which two were empty, two in which only women lived and three had not signed the petition. Three petitioners lived in one house, one had died and eight had left. Some did not live in the parish at all. One man had signed for 12 persons who could not write for themselves.

1905 08 19

Caxton workhouse inmates had a pound of suet pudding with treacle for dinner on Wednesday but left a great deal of it. On Thursday they had suet pudding again with a little bread and cheese but simply ate the bread and cheese and left the suet pudding. It was a waste of good stuff. Surely nobody could eat a pound of suet pudding for dinner? But the Master said some of them ate three or four pounds of it. It was decided to change to Irish stew on Wednesdays. 05 08 19

1905 12 14

An inquest was held on an inmate of Caxton Workhouse. It was the first night the cells had been artificially heated this winter, the flue passed underneath his cell and there had been an escape of

carbonic acid gas which had suffocated him. The occupant of the next cell was also affected. The cells will not be used again until the flues were replaced by a hot water heating apparatus 05 12 14 & a

1908 04 17

A well being sunk at the kennels of the Cambs Hunt at Caxton had reached a depth of 40 feet. A workman was lowered by rope and pulley in the usual way when he gave a shout and fell to the bottom. For some reason the precaution of lowering a naked light as a test of the purity of the air was omitted. Attempts to rescue him failed and at the time of writing the body (which was plainly discernible from the surface) had not been removed. He leaves a widow and two children. 08 04 17a

1908 12 25

A curious situation developed after the chaplain of Caxton workhouse resigned and the Guardians decided to ask the vicar and the Baptist minister of Caxton to share the duties and divide the salary. There were Nonconformists in every district and it was only fair they should receive equal rights. They got a large number of inmates from Gamlingay where there were two Nonconformists to every Church of England person. CWN 08 12 25

1909 02 19

Caxton Guardians dispute over chaplain – 09 02 19

1909 12 31

The festivities of Christmas Day passed off in a most enjoyable manner at Caxton Workhouse. The chapel, dining hall and sick wards were tastefully decorated one dinner consisted of roast beef, mutton, pork, plum pudding, beer and mineral waters. In the evening a few friends and the officers amused the inmates with a gramophone, singing and dancing. On Boxing Day Mrs Briscoe of Longstowe Hall invited the children to tea and gave each a present. CWN 09 12 31

1911 06 09

The garden of Caxton Vicarage was the scene of a very charming fete and fair, held to raise money with which to build a parish room. A piece of land, centrally situated, has already been purchased for £90 and something like £300 more is needed for the erection of the room itself. It would keep the young people in the village instead of going off to the towns. There was a handkerchief stall, Aunt Sally and Hoop-la while Morris Dancers performed 'Speed the Plough', 'Bean setting', 'Hunting the Squirrel' and others which delighted our forefathers 11 06 09d

1912 01 26

The question of providing an adequate water supply to rural areas is attracting a great deal of attention. One cottage at Caxton stood a quarter of a mile from the village pump and, except for the rain water caught from the roof, they had to carry every drop of water from the pump. The family was a large one and they did their own laundry work, so one could guess how many journeys would be made in the course of a week in the hot, dry weather. Yet they refused to have water laid on and the Parish Meeting had unanimously opposed a supply. However it was the District, not the Parish Council, who was responsible. Old prejudices are deep rooted and a rural population notoriously slow in absorbing a new idea. If they neglected their duty the Medical Officer would bring pressure to bear on them. 12 01 26 d & e & h

1912 05 03

Caxton water supply inquiry – 12 05 03e & f

1912 06 21

Police Inspector Chevill testified that he saw a traction engine drawing three empty wagons travelling at a fast rate and got on his bike to follow. The driver went through Caxton village at about ten miles an hour – the limit was two mph. When he stopped at the bridge to take on water the driver said he'd put the brakes on when going down the hill but they were a bit greasy. If there had been anybody in

the way they must have been run over. There had been several narrow escapes from accidents in the village through the defendant's negligent driving. He was fined twenty five shillings. 12 06 21b

1912 08 16

Caxton water scheme – 12 08 16aa, bb

1912 09 27

Caxton water supply opposed by village – 12 09 27h

1919 11 22

Caxton water scheme – 12 11 22

1913 01 03

Caxton guardians' diphtheria

1913 01 17 CIP

Cambs assizes – manslaughter Caxton workhouse*,

1913 04 25

Mrs Emma Hosegood was Matron of workhouse, for 36 years. As Miss Porter she started as schoolmistress at Caxton workhouse before moving to Cambridge where Luke Hosegood was schoolmaster. They married and were offered the posts of Master and Matron at Mill Road. All her life was devoted to her work, striving to improve and maintain the high standard of efficiency she set up. 13 04 25 p10 CIP

1913 05 09

Caxton water supply, Eltisley withdraws from scheme

1913 05 23

Caxton lack of houses

1913 06 06

Caxton parish water supply

1914 04 17

Death of Mr. John Peacock. We regret to announce the death at the advanced age of 79 years of Mr. J Peacock, which took place at his residence, the Cross Keys, Caxton, on Sunday. For some months he had been in failing health, which gave great anxiety to his friends, but he only took to his bed on Thursday last. Although suffering from a complication of diseases, he was cheerful to the last. His familiar figure will be greatly missed at Cambridge, St. Neots and other local markets, which he attended when in his usual health. As a keen sportsman, no one was better known to the members of the Cambridgeshire Hunt, in which he always took the keenest interest. In politics, he was a staunch Conservative, although not taking a prominent part. For many years he was Sanitary Inspector under the Caxton and Arrington Rural District Council and also a member of the Caxton Parish Council, being also Overseer. These offices he relinquished quite recently, owing to failing health. – 1914 04 17 CIPof

1914 08 14

Miss Cochrane asked Caxton Guardians if the workhouse could be used as a temporary Red Cross hospital if required. There was no water and that was a great handicap. If necessary the hospital would have to be used as well. She would provide her own beds but asked whether the housing bedding and pillows could be used.

1914 09 11

Caxton workhouse unsuitable VAD hospital

1914 09 11

Territorials – response, Caxton, Foxton, Meldreth, Eltisley, Godmanchester, Swaffham Prior, Whittlesford,

1914 10 16

Caxton school closure

1914 10 23

Belgian refugees Sawston, Histon, concert, Huntingdon, list Cambridge names & where billeted; p3
Caxton Infectious Diseases Hospital to be used

1914 11 06

Caxton workhouse takes Belgians

1914 12 04

Caxton water supply

1919 08 06

On the Gibbet.—Great amusement has been caused among residents in the neighbourhood and hundreds of passers-by at the hanging of the "Kaiser from the Caxton Gibbet. Here, where, in days gone by, murderers and miscreants were said to have been hanged, the "Mad Dog of Europe" is now suspended by the neck Attached to the effigy, which swings in the breeze, is the guilty admission, "I deserve it—Kaiser Bill."

1920 04 03

Caxton workhouse sick ward burnt out

1921 08 17

Caxton church memorial stone Rev Henry Smythe – 21 08 17a

1923 08 16

Cambridge county court heard an action for damage to a private road at Caxton Common farm. 5-600 sacks of Barley were moved by a traction engine and truck, the engine weighing eight or ten tons and the truck some three tons. The result was that the road was cut up so that it was impossible to use it for traffic of any description. The ruts made by the engine were so deep that the wheels of the trucks did not revolve and it slithered along on the axles. The road was not now usable even for horse traffic.

1924 01 22

At the County Council Miss Cochrane moved that the lark be included in the list of birds protected during the whole of the year. A Caxton farmer told her they did no harm, and yet a large number of them were caught every winter, and they were getting scarce. She believed they kept very much to their particular district and would not fly into other areas. Councillor Jackson said there was no doubt the larks which sang in the summer did little harm, but there was another kind of lark that came over in huge migratory flocks and did a great deal of damage. The greatest enemies of the birds are telegraph wires and snowstorms. The motion was lost

1925 05 22 c

Shortly after midnight a small band of cyclists sallied forth from against the Senate House en route to join several thousand of fellow-wheelmen at Meriden in a memorial service to cyclists killed in the war. A cyclist from Royston joined the party at the Caxton Gibbet cross-roads where a halt was called to don capes. On the sharp bend approaching St Neots a two-seater car, with lamps alight, was embedded head-on in the hedge and a near-by telegraph pole leaning at an alarming rate. Nothing was to be seen of the occupants and the cyclists carried on to Bedford, which was reached about 3 am

1927 12 27

The Ortona motor buses had a terrible time in the blizzard. Two buses were stuck in snowdrifts out Newmarket way, one near Teversham corner, a Willingham bus on the Huntingdon Road near the Five Bells, a Caxton bus near Toft and a Saffron Walden bus near Whittlesford station, where they remained many hours. Another bus got nearly to Sawston before it got stuck and had to be dug out and the Fulbourn bus could only get as far as the Robin Hood, Cherry Hinton. Relief gangs were sent to the rescue of the stranded vehicles and they were being dug out and coming home one by one.

1928 09 01

A case of typhoid occurred at Caxton Police Station. The patient, a woman, had been away from home a week or two before becoming ill and it would be extremely difficult to trace its origin. Various ditches and drains in the district were in an unsatisfactory condition. Likely sources of infection such as drainage and milk supply were being investigated. There had been no other case of typhoid in the county for 2½ years. Two cases of scarlet fever occurred at Papworth Everard; the patients have been removed to Cambridge Isolation Hospital & the house disinfected

1928 10 19

The ancient parish church of Caxton has long been in a sad state of decay. The chancel, nave and tower, floor, walls and roof have been unsafe for some years. Last year toadstools were growing at the foot of the pillars, which were green with fungus, and ivy grew through cracks. Huge lumps of plaster continually falling from the ceiling have made it dangerous for worship in the nave. Water poured through the roof in twenty places, the walls were crumbling and the floor in the last stages of rot. Scarcely a pew can be used again and hardly a rafter is free from rot. The population is small and consists of agricultural labourers but they have already raised £100 and now appeal for funds.

1929 07 20

Caxton pageant – CDN 20.7.1929

1930 01 28

The inaugural meeting of the Cambridge branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England heard that the appearance of a Charles II house at the corner of the road between Huntingdon and the Great North Road had recently been completely spoiled by some dreadful enamelled signs and that Caxton – a gem of a village surrounded by lovely undulating land – could not now be approached unless one was ‘hit in the eye’ by a horrible advertisement which blocked the way. The Bishop of Ely said the motor business and traffic had a tremendous amount to answer for. The petrol stations were just like fungus. In regard to local beauty spots they had Wicken fen and also beet sugar factories. (Laughter) 30 01 28

1930 02 27

One of the objects of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England is to persuade advertisers to refrain from the use of advertisement hoardings and boards in the countryside where they spoil the approach to villages. It is encouraging that the Dominion Motor Spirit Company has decided to remove two large advertisements at the entrance to Caxton village on the Old North Road. They take the view that other means should be sought other than those which take away the charm of the countryside. 30 02 27

1931 04 10

Cambridgeshire had its first taste of dirt-track thrills when a crowd of 5,000 witnessed some excellent racing on the new speedway at Caxton. The management had not anticipated such a crush with the result that the solitary entrance was sorely taxed and the pay-box nearly pushed over by the pressure of the queues. Despite showers the track rode well and although there were several falls only one rider – Buster Cray – was injured. The Eastern Counties’ scratch event was one by Puff Morley, who rode in fearless style. 31 04 10h

1931 07 10

We have to record the death Longstowe blacksmith, James Huckle, after three months illness. Deceased came to the village 30 years ago as smith with the late Mr Jacobs and carried on the business after the death of his employer. The funeral service at the church was choral and a large number of beautiful floral tributes were received. The coffin bore the inscription 'James Ernest Huckle, died June 27th 1931, aged 53 years'. Messrs King of Caxton carried out the funeral arrangements. 31 07 10b

1931 08 07

Caxton dirt track racing photo – 31 08 07b

1933 05 26

The Vicar of Caxton sought permission to install electric lighting in the church. Mrs Muriel Patterson, the donor, wanted directional lighting from the roof as hanging lamps would interfere with the congregation's view during service and break the beauty. The Diocesan Chancellor said he did not like the scheme, it was a great mistake. But he could not condemn the church to its present means of illumination, which was by oil. 33 05 26a

1934 03 22

The final meeting of Linton Rural District Council was held before it combined with Melbourn and Caxton and Arrington to form the new South Cambridgeshire RDC. It could not be termed a 'funeral party' for the council has never been a soulless machine and died as it had lived in a friendly and pleasant atmosphere. White-haired Canon Thornton has presided over it from 1909, the last of the three chairmen. He remembered when some councillors rode to meetings on horseback and put their horses in the place later used for the hearse. Their last debate was on the biggest scheme ever launched: the plan for supplying water to the whole district. 34 03 22

1934 09 22

A pilot from the Klemann Air Services offered people flying trips in his blue Klemm monoplane from a field near the Gibbet Inn, Caxton. But he did not hold a proper licence to carry passengers for reward and the field was not approved as a regular place of landing and departure for aircraft. The landlord said the pilot had landed in his field and said he was looking to start a flying school. He had got permission from the owners, Paines the brewers, to put up an air indicator and applied to the Air Ministry for a licence which had not yet been granted. 34 09 22

1936 01 03

Proposals to establish a greyhound racing track at Caxton or any part of the rural district could injure the amenities of the area, councillors decided. But Mr Pease said there was already a track at Teversham and if the residents of Histon rose up and said they wanted a track to make life more interesting there, they should not object to it. The conversion of The Elms, Great Shelford, into a country club was also opposed as the land was zoned for eight houses per acre 36 01 03b

1936 07 24

A former undergraduate told the court he had hired a plane from Marshall's Flying School and flown to Caxton where he landed and then taxied towards the Gibbet. There was a haystack between him and the hotel and he hit a pole which had been erected with a wind-sock, but there was no wind-sock. The propeller and two wings were damaged. But he disputed the cost of repairs and said the job could have been done in three days and two wings were not necessary: he'd had a similar accident at Lympe when the machine had been repaired next day for £35. 36 07 24c

1936 12 12

Farmer killed in aircraft crash near Caxton Gibbet – 36 12 12c

1937 05 03

The Rural Community Council's new advisory service for parish councils was launched at Cambridgeshire House. Burrough Green, Caxton, Coton, Gt Chishill, Newton and Longstowe were amongst 18 councils whose wish to affiliate were received. 37 05 03

1937 08 03

Inquests on Mepal man struck by van, Stuntney Hall tree branch & of motor cyclist kicked by horse near Caxton Gibbet 37 08 03b & c

1937 11 03

Papworth Village Settlement had been acting illegally by running a bus to and from Cambridge. Journeys were varied according to need, carrying staff, patients, visiting relatives and special visitors. Patients are carried at a special rate and special journeys have frequently to be made to meet them off trains. Ambulance cases are charged according to distance. It would be impossible to carry on their work without it. Eastern Counties provided no service on four days a week and Eastern National came no nearer than Caxton Gibbet. 37 11 03

1939 04 15

Caxton Gibbet stood on its usual site on the Old North Road late on Sunday evening. Early Monday morning only a stump of about six inches remained. The gibbet had not been knocked down but neatly sawn off. It was a replica made by the brewers Payne for the hotel using very old oak and had only been standing about five years. The site had always been remembered as the scene of old-time hangings. Now it will be replaced. 39 04 15

1939 04 22

Caxton gibbet – last man hanged was Partridge – 39 04 22b

1939 11 30

Over possessed an obsolete Merryweather manual fire engine dated 1789 which with three lengths of unserviceable hose and eleven buckets was valued at £7 10s. Willingham's 1827 manual engine with trailer tank, ladders and hose was valued at rather more - £14. Other parish engines at Caxton, Cottenham, Horningsea, Oakington and Swavesey would be acquired by Chesterton District Council at the valuation price 39 11 30

1940 08 02

M.C. for Cambs. man. Among the recent awards to soldiers in the Middle East is that of the Military Cross to Second Lt. W. V. Hamilton Cape. Aged 22, 2nd Lt. Cape is the surviving son of Capt. and Mrs. N. W. Cape, of Caxton Manor, Caxton. The incident for which the award is made occurred when Second Lt. Cape attacked a large Italian column which was protected by 12 tanks. During the battle, one of Lt. Cape's two armoured cars had a puncture. Despite heavy enemy fire, he changed the wheel, at the same time directing the second car to harass the Italians. This kept the enemy at bay until British reinforcements arrived, when the entire Italian column was destroyed or captured. It may be remembered that Capt. and Mrs. Cape's elder son, Flying Officer Roy N. T. Cape, was killed at Duxford in August. 1926. 40 08 02

1941 12 19

William Caxton and Caxton, — Telling of the Cambridgeshire village of Caxton, some of the guide books state that it was the birthplace of William Caxton (1422-1491), who first introduced the art of printing into England, and a correspondent interested in the art of printing and of Caxton's work says the statement is entirely erroneous says Watchman. We have Caxton's own authority, says my correspondent, that he. was born in the county of Kent, for he says in the preface of the first, book he printed, and which he translated from the French, the "Reculé of the Historyes of Troye": In France was I never, and was born and lerned myne English in Kente in the Weeld, where English is spoken broad and rude". This avowal must therefore be regarded as decisive. A famous Caxtonian was Matthew Paris, who was born in the village, about the year 1195. He became a Benedictine monk of

St. Albans, and was one of the most learned men of his time— architect, mathematician, poet, orator and historian. 41 12 19

1946 10 17

Goering effigy hanged Caxton Gibbet – 46 10 17, photo 46 10 18

1947 03 13

From all parts of the district today come stories of flooded roads, following on the thaw and rain, with some of them impassable to traffic. In Cambridge itself, Parkers Piece, which for weeks has been an expanse of dazzling white, with not so much as a blade of grass showing, now resembles a lake. At St Ives some of the back streets are flooded fairly extensively, the water on the road to a depth of about 10 inches entering many houses in the town, forcing people to move their belongings upstairs. Traffic had to be diverted last night because of the movement washing water into the houses. Three feet of water in places is reported at both Pampisford and Caxton, with vehicles stuck in the mud at the latter village and having to be dug out.

1947 06 12

A report by the Bishop of Ely's Advisory Committee on the Care of Churches considered eight churches which were in danger of partial collapse. Typical examples are the fine medieval towers of Soham and Orwell, the interesting chancel of Hatley St George, the roof of Caxton and almost the whole church of Wicken, which is splitting in half. There were also a large number of churches where considerable repair was needed now to prevent serious decay later. Some of the failures could be attributed to soil subsidence or rough weather, but for the most part were due to the accumulation of repairs postponed because of the war

1948 05 11

The watching eyes of Britain's air defence went into action on Sunday in the biggest-scale Royal Observer Corps activity in the district since the war. Observer posts were manned at Cherry Hinton, Linton, Caxton, St Ives, Abbots Ripton, Littleport and elsewhere following the movements of jet fighters, Spitfires, Lancaster and Lincoln bombers and other types of aircraft numbering over 100 aircraft put up by the RAF. At Linton I found the observers proud of their post, built at their own expense by their own labours during the war

1948 07 02

What might be termed the swan-Song of the Cambridge County Council Public assistance Committee took place at Shire Hall. In common with many other similar committees its duties will be taken over by the Ministry of Health on 5th July. The chairman, Mrs Mellish Clark, said that at the County Hospital Mill Road they decided to develop the maternity work, to close the casual wards and move the nursery children out to Linton. At Chesterton Hospital they had built a new casual ward, but when the war came these wards were converted by the additional of hospital beds and were being so used at the present time. At Linton they had built a Nurses Home but as there was no proper sanitation at Caxton they had decided to pull it down

1948 09 13

Heavy and persistent rain put a literal damper on Cambridge Centaur Motor Cycle Club's last scramble of the 1948 season at The Moats, Caxton, but a large crowd defied the weather to watch a first-class programme of races. Mackintoshes were the order of the day - even some of the riders were wearing them! The Caxton course was slightly longer, and somewhat trickier than that at Cherry Hinton. The rain, mixing with the earth churned up by the motorcycles, quickly produced a treacherous muddy surface which increased the natural hazards facing the competitors. Indeed the first hill on the circuit proved to be practically unconquerable - rider after rider came to grief there - and quite early the course was remarked to bypass the dangerous slope

1949 11 28

Over Fen Committee are vigorously building up their case to present to the Land Commission in order to prevent Over and Bare fens being taken over by the Government. To illustrate what could happen Mr Mealling said he bought a smallholding near Caxton Gibbet ten years ago. As a war gesture he allowed it to be cultivated by the Government, who had later extended this War Emergency Act to 1950. "My land was taken over and ever since I have seen men skim the cream off my land while I sit there wanting a living", he said. The Vicar said there were 80 fields in Bare Fen of about 3 ½ acres which was extremely valuable to the owners and occupiers, as it provided out-wintering for stock for which there was no other accommodation. If it is taken and blocked there are going to be men here who cannot graze or stock cattle

1951 04 10

The Automobile Association reports several cases of flooded roads in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. The worst are at St Neots papermills but water which was ten inches deep on the main road at Caxton was down to four inches this morning. Highest of all rivers is the Cam with extensive flooding on Coe Fen and in the stream near the river on the Backs. There are patrols on the banks of the Cam and the Old West and at Ely the river is four foot six inches above normal.

1953 06 19

An open verdict was recorded at an inquest into the Venezuelan pilot of a Meteor jet plane which crashed near Pasture Farm, Caxton. Wreckage was scattered over a wide area. PC Leonard from Caxton described how he was awakened at 1.20 am by the roar of a low-flying aircraft. From his window he saw a red flash and heard an explosion. The pilot had taken off from Oakington just before midnight. He was in Britain as head of a Venezuela training mission.

1954 07 17

There were strong protests at plans for new offices at Shire Hall Cambridge. The new building would contain Assize and Quarter Sessions courts, offices and accommodation for the County Library. The courts at Linton, Caxton, Melbourn and Bottisham were 'shockers', housed in old police stations and the magistrates would be only too happy to do their work in an up-to-date building. Architects had strongly advised against cheese-pairing costs of the assembly hall: Cambridge's lovely college buildings had been the best and had stood the test of time and the costs of labour and materials were rising. But a new plan for one-tier local government might mean the doom of County Councils and the scheme should be deferred.

1954 12 23

One cold December night just before Christmas 1933 a dozen motor cycling enthusiasts gathered in a room over a public house in Chesterton and decided to form the Centaur Motor Cycle Club. Pre-war it was mainly a social club catering for the weekend rider. With war came petrol rationing and shortage of oil but the club somehow kept going. In 1945 it began to get back on its feet, organising the first scramble at Caxton. They then pioneered events such as trials, grass track racing and sidecar events. Now, 21 years later, over 160 members crowded into the Dorothy Restaurant to celebrate the club's coming-of-age

1959 01 07

A number of roads flooded following overnight rain and early morning snow. The Caxton village crossroads had water up to eight feet deep and a large lorry was stranded in the middle. Ickleton High Street was flooded and several pigs drowned at Church Hall Farm, Whaddon. Queen's Road, Cambridge, was flooded opposite St John's College with traffic diverted along Grange Road. The level of the Cam was the highest since 1947 and overflowed Pye's Sports Ground. 59 01 07; photo 59 01 09 CIP

1959 05 14

The new Bourn Parochial School was formally opened, when complete will take 200 children from Kingston, Longstowe and Caxton. The original school was a Church of England building where all

the village children from the ages of five to 15 received their education. Since 1945 the numbers had risen from 70 to 170 with additional accommodation in hutments on the former aerodrome, a mile away. 59 05 14a

1959 05 20

The facilities for private flying and gliding in Cambridge are as good as those in many larger cities. At Cambridge Airport there exists a flying school, a flying group and a gliding club, and a few miles distant at Duxford another gliding club run by the R.A.F. Gliding and Soaring Association which caters for a limited number of civilians. In April 1935 the Cambridge University Gliding Club made its first flight field at Caxton Gibbet. A St Neots butcher, Tom Ayres, placed a field at their disposal and loaned them a barn for use as a hangar. 59 05 20a & b & c & e

1960

The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings from this date

1960 07 08

Cambridge Independent Press illustrated feature articles feature Caxton – 60 07 08 CIP

1962 04 23

Tiger Moth crashes at Caxton – 62 04 23b

1963 01 29

Caxton church is situated on the site of the original village burnt at the time of the Black Death, some half-mile from the present settlement and parishioners find it rather a long walk. So the vicar has provided a transport service for members of the congregation. The church bus, which is capable of seating 12 people and driven by the Rev B.B. Edmonds himself, covers the area before morning and afternoon services. No charge is made for transport and passengers ride at their own risk. 63 01 29

1963 11 08

The landlady of the inn at Caxton Gibbet says the pub is haunted. A former innkeeper decided to rob three wealthy travellers during the night, but one woke so he killed them all and disposed of the bodies down the well from which the inn took its water supply. Footsteps are heard from the upstairs room to the trapdoor which still covers the well. At the Royal Oak in St Neots an unpleasant smell is believed to be the decaying corpse of a man who hanged himself from a meat-hook in a pantry. The body was not found for three days. 63 11 08a & b

1964 03 26

Caxton life in a village photo feature – 64 03 26a

1964 04 17

After living for half the winter in the old Lolworth village hall, the Adams family have hope of better accommodation. The trouble started when Mr Adams took a job with a farmer at Caxton when the family lived in a tied cottage. They then moved to Lolworth for a new job. At that time they had a caravan but were unable to keep it so moved into the derelict hall. It has toilet and washing facilities and cooking has been done on a solid fuel stove. Now Mrs Adams has gone into Mill Road maternity hospital to have a baby leaving her husband to look after the other four children and large Alsatian dog. 64 04 17

1964 08 01

Caxton is a dying village following the closure of one of the two general stores in the village. It is in three separate clumps including a council estate built since the war. But there was insufficient employment and most tenants had to work away from the village. Local industry should be established providing jobs for 30 people. The parish council had drawn up a plan for carefully phased development 64 08 01a

1964 09 25

Caxton Gibbet roundabout construction – 64 09 25

1965 03 26

Caxton gibbet effigy placed by farmers- 65 03 26c

1965 04 12

Turret clock at Caxton's Elizabethan Manor House to be removed; given 1887 – 65 04 12a

1965 09 01

Caxton bypass could become a lifeline to 'dead' village – 65 09 01a

1974 08 16

Some publicity pictures are a real hang up. But one sent out by Cambridge folk group, Spriguns of Tolgus, is a fake (showing the group at Caxton Gibbet). The group's bass Mike Morton read that the last public hanging at Caxton gibbet was in the 1750s. He naturally wanted to put the record straight. "The last public hanging at Caxton occurred on 6th August 1974". The victim was the group's new drummer, Rod Moore. Mandy Morton is cringing and Chris Russon reads an ancient paper in the photo they commissioned. They reckon the scene is connected with one of their traditional folk numbers, about William Corder, hanged in Bury for the murder of Maria Martin

1978 04 19 c

Eerie midnight howling is haunting the Caxton Gibbet Hotel – but the spine-chilling sounds are very real. They come from a homeless dog which has been roaming the district for about four years, ever since it was abandoned near the Gibbet Hotel. The elusive creature, a greyhound, has been christened Queenie. "It comes here most nights at about 12.30 and howls away at the front of the pub", said Mrs Mavis Spencer, the landlady. "I leave food for it each night and we turn out the lights and watch as it grabs a piece, runs off to eat it, then comes back for more"

1980 02 02

Caxton magistrates sat for the last time before moving to the new court building at Lion Yard, Cambridge. Some looked back through their old records going back to 1863 when courts were sometimes held in a magistrate's house or the local pub. Sentences were severe, particularly for theft. One man was jailed for 14 days with hard labour in 1864 for stealing potatoes and next year a 13-year old from Chesterton was sent to a reformatory for three years for stealing a concertina worth five shillings. Cambridge City Magistrates Court in the Guildhall also closed; it had been the starting point for many trials but working conditions were now very difficult. 80 02 02

1982 08 13

Paine's Brewery at St Neots, established in 1831, has been bought by a consortium of businessmen. The new company will be known as James Paine Brewery and be responsible for 20 tied houses. Paine plc which deals mainly in milling and malt extract, retains the ownership of the Cross Keys at St Neots, the Caxton Gibbet pub and the Brampton Motel. 82 08 13

1982 12 16

A gentle coffee-coloured steer made it a happy day for Dick Underwood of Godmanchester at the Cambridge Christmas livestock show at the Cattle Market. The pig championship went to Mr F. Ketteridge of Ashdon, with the reserve title going to Littleton House School, Girton. In the sheep section T. Wakefield of Caxton beat the Boxworth Farming Company for the title. 82 12 16

1983 06 23

Peter King is probably best known for his 36 controversial years as a local councillor and for the sale of his home, Bourn Hall, for use as a test tube baby clinic. But his toughest fight began when it was discovered that he had cancer. 'Old King' comes from the background of generations of small, highly independent family builders in Caxton. When he told his 97-year-old aunt that he was suffering from

the disease she told him “We’ll you’ll just have to pull yourself together”. Her reaction, and the fact that he laughs whenever he retells the story, gives some idea of the spirit in which his battle against the disease has been conducted. 83 06 23 p22

1984 10 11

Miner’s leader Arthur Scargill has followed in the unlikely footsteps of Kaiser Bill in having his effigy strung up at Caxton Gibbet. The gibbet was last used for a real hanging in 1750 for a mail-coach robber from Royston but in 1919 someone used it to string up ‘the Mad Dog of Europe’. Now they are in use again with an effigy of Mr Scargill which appeared overnight bearing the words ‘Scargill, Scum of the Earth. No one has claimed responsibility and Caxton villagers are staying silent. 84 10 11 p5

1985 05 09

Every parish in south Cambridgeshire could have its own nature reserve. A start has been made with the church at East Hatley which is kept locked though nesting boxes for birds and bats have been installed and damaged windows allow entry to many winged colonisers. Outside the graveyard has a wide range of chalkland flowers and its rich with butterflies. Other sites include Caxton stone pit, Litlington chalk pit and the former sewage works at Comberton now known as Watts’ Wood. None has plants or wildlife of great rarity but they are oases in the desert of arable farming and the last surviving habitats for animals which were once very common. 85 05 09b

1986 05 22

A new town for up to 18,000 people may be created as a cure for Cambridge’s spiralling housing needs. It would include shops, pubs, leisure facilities and 150 acres of supporting industry. Two possible sites are the A10 Waterbeach-Landbeach area and the Caxton, Bourn and Swavesey area between the A45 and A604. One solution would be if the Ministry of Defence could be persuaded to leave either Waterbeach or Oakington bases. But County planners have rejected any new settlement south of Cambridge, fearing housing would be snapped up by M11 and railway commuters 86 05 22

1986 11 04

The Caxton Gibbet pub has been sold and now faces several months of refurbishment before reopening in the New Year. Over recent years the pub, which dates back to the 1930s, has had a succession of tenants while being owned by Paines Brewery. Now it will be opened as a free house and restaurant with an English-style image, hoping to attract motorists using the busy A45. 86 10 30b Ambitious plans have been unveiled for ‘Crow Green’, a new town of up to 11,000 people near the junction of the A14 and A14 at Caxton Gibbet. The developers hope the busy A45 would be upgraded to dual carriageway all the way between Cambridge and the A1. This follows other plans for a new town of 2,200 homes near Dry Drayton. These are some of 11 major bids for development just submitted to planners. 86 11 04

1987 04 21

A Bourn couple who have supplied fellow villages with newspapers for 25 years were honoured at a retirement presentation. Ron and Doris Jones, who delivered the papers themselves in Bourn, Caxton and Longstowe, were presented with a radio, rose bowl and tin of biscuits. Doris made friends with dogs on her round by tempting them with pocketfuls of biscuits, so villages thought it was time to turn the tables. 87 04 21

1987 07 01

A new village could be built on farm land behind the Caxton Gibbet. Called Swansley Wood, it would have 3,000 homes with a business park, village centre and landscaped country park. There would be community facilities such as pubs, shops and churches together with indoor and outdoor facilities. But the plan faces stiff competition as there are similar proposals for four other villages in the area while the County Council favours a scheme on the A10 at Stretham. 87 07 01

1987 08 29

Another developer has put in plans for a new village off the A45. Hillson and Twigden want to build 1,500 homes on 200 acres of farmland east of Highfields, near Caldecote. They say it would link up with rapidly-expanding Hardwick and provide additional schooling and shopping. It did not use top agricultural land and was close to the underused A45 dual carriageway which would be even less used when the A1/M1 link is built. There are already five other plans for a new village between Bourn and Caxton as an alternative to the preferred county council site off the A10 near Ely. 87 08 29

1987 11 18

Caxton Gibbet Inn has been born again. A year ago the only sound was dripping water in the empty building. Now it is alive with the sound of clinking glasses and dishes being prepared by a chef who has worked at the Dorchester. The new owners have spent a fortune renovating it and plan to expand with a 20 room motel on the present car park. They have also adopted the adjacent gibbet and given it three coats of varnish to protect it 87 11 18